



# Congressman Bud Cramer

October 2003

E-Newsletter

I have recently made improvements to my website, <http://cramer.house.gov>. On the website you can find different press releases, information about key issues being discussed on Capitol Hill, and the ways that my office can help you. There are also links to North Alabama attractions and newspapers. I am constantly updating the site, so I encourage you to check regularly for new information. I hope that you find my monthly newsletter informative about the events going on in Washington and in North Alabama. I want as many people as possible to know about all the good things that are happening across the Fifth District of Alabama, so please forward this newsletter to your family and friends.

*Bud Cramer*

## Washington Update



Cramer with National Youth Congressional Leadership Students Michelle Jennings and Katharine Buck of Huntsville, and Ambra Johnson of Scottsboro (above).

Congress recently passed the Defense and Homeland Security Appropriations Bills. The Defense Appropriations Bill provides \$368.2 billion for defense programs, including over \$64 million for projects in North Alabama. The Homeland Security Bill includes \$29.4 billion for operations and activities of the Department of Homeland Security. These important bills will make our nation more secure and our military better equipped to protect our freedom.

On October 8<sup>th</sup>, the House passed H.R. 2998, The Injured Soldiers Hospital Bill. This bill permanently eliminates the requirement for servicemen and women from paying for their meals while hospitalized as a result of combat or combat related injuries. This legislation corrects this practice and gives these soldiers the respect they deserve.

The interest rate on 30-year Treasury bonds, which was used to calculate the amount of money employers must set aside in an employee pension plan, was discontinued in 2001. Recently, the House passed H.R. 3108, The Pension Funding Equity Act, that protects the retirement pension of millions of American working families by requiring employers to use a blend of corporate bond index rates for two years through 2005 or until a permanent replacement is identified.

The House overwhelmingly voted for H.R. 2297, The Veterans Benefit Act. This bill will modify and improve certain benefits including the expansion of veterans' educational benefits for certain self-employment training and providing permanent authority for State Veterans' Cemeteries.

## District Update

Congressman Cramer joined U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp (R-TN) to lead a panel discussion with Rex Geveden (Deputy Director of Marshall Space Flight Center), Bill Baxter (Director of TVA), and Gerald Boyd (Director of the U.S. Dept. of Energy, Oak Ridge), about economic development at the 2003 Tennessee Valley Corridor Economic Summit in Chattanooga, TN (left).

Congressman Cramer and Jackson County officials unveiled the New Mobile Methamphetamine Crime Lab for Jackson County. The Congressman was able to secure federal funding that helped purchase this vehicle. Jackson County has one of the highest methamphetamine rates in the state. This vehicle will provide Jackson County officers constant access to the necessary equipment to fight this epidemic (right).

Congressman Cramer toured the construction of the Marshall Space Flight Center's Propulsion Research Lab. The Congressman played a key role in securing over \$30 million for construction of the PRL. Once construction is complete, the PRL will be the home of cutting-edge research from across the country.

